



Yellowstone Roads

A newsletter about ongoing issues with Yellowstone Park roads.

July 2003

Third Phase of East Entrance Road Reconstruction (East Entrance Gate to Sylvan Pass)

Construction of this seven-mile segment of the East Entrance Road from the East Entrance to Sylvan Pass is scheduled to begin late in the spring of 2004. The project is part of the parkwide road improvement program that will reconstruct the principal park roads to a 30-foot width. Efforts to reconstruct Yellowstone National Park roads began in 1992 with the *Parkwide Road Improvement Plan*. Three segments of the East Entrance Road, and nearly half of the park's major roads, have recently been reconstructed to this road standard.

As indicated in the *Environmental Assessment: Reconstruct East Entrance Road*, provided for public review and comment in 1992, the preferred alternative is to widen and reconstruct the road on the current alignment. The road alignment will generally follow the existing curves of the present road with appropriate design speeds. Ditches will be constructed or widened to allow for water runoff and to catch falling rock. Repair and reconstruction of existing masonry walls will occur, and in some locations these walls will be extended or relocated to other areas along the route. Weathering steel W-beam Corten guardrails, the same type used on other segments of the East Entrance Road, will replace the existing deteriorated post and cable guardrail system. An additional 2,100 feet of guardrail would be constructed near the top portion of the road. In some areas, various types of cable guardrail may be used.

Existing culvert headwalls, previously documented as contributing to the historic character of the road, will be removed and reconstructed as pipe culverts are extended or replaced. Existing stone masonry headwalls will



The portion of the East Entrance Road between Sylvan Pass and the East Entrance Gate will be reconstructed to a 30-foot width beginning in 2004.

be reconstructed using the same material and in the same manner to retain their historic appearance. There are several large, deeply buried concrete arch culverts that will be repaired and extended by inserting a sleeve.

Several large parking areas near streams may be redesigned to provide landscaped areas for visitors to stop and view the scenery. Some large underused paved parking areas close to the East Entrance may be downsized and modified to provide a less intrusive feel. The road design through the East Entrance station area will remain within the present footprint.

The avalanche-prone "brown drift" area just east of Sylvan Pass and the material source area at Sylvan Pass could be reconstructed in the second year of this contract in 2005. If not then, it would occur in the final stage, after the Fishing Bridge to Indian Pond segment in 2006 and the Pelican Creek viaduct planned for 2008.

The exact date for construction of these two projects would be dependent upon available funding. The pullout and proposed roadside interpretation of the Corkscrew Bridge will also be included in the final stage of the East Entrance Road reconstruction.

Yellowstone National Park has completed formal consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regarding threatened and endangered species and this proposed road project.

Feel free to comment on any new issues not covered by the *Environmental Assessment: Reconstruct East Entrance Road*, and send them to:

Superintendent
Re: East Entrance Road Reconstruction
P.O. Box 168
Yellowstone National Park, WY 82190

Old Faithful Circulation Study to Commence

Yellowstone National Park has retained the services of HNTB, an architectural and engineering firm in Denver, Colorado to conduct a traffic and pedestrian study of the Old Faithful area. This study will take an in-depth view of pedestrian and vehicular circulation, directional signs, alternative transportation options, and capacities of infrastructure such as parking lots, walkways, and buildings.

HNTB employees met with Yellowstone National Park staff during the last week of October to discuss the scope of the project, and to get their views on locations which present safety, circulation, visitor confusion, and operations problems.

The study will involve a review of documents relating to transportation, past planning, and future direction, and make recommendations to the park for the Old Faithful area.

The study and options for correcting circulation problems is scheduled to be completed late in 2003 or early 2004.

If you would like to comment on this project or offer insight on circulation issues and problem areas for vehicles and pedestrians at Old Faithful, please write us at:

Superintendent
Old Faithful Circulation Study
P.O. Box 168
Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming
82190



Dunraven Road Reconstruction Project to Begin Summer of 2003

Reconstruction on the Tower Junction to Canyon Junction road (the Dunraven Road) will begin the summer of 2003. At present the road is open to public travel through July 31, 2003. The road will be closed to all public traffic from Canyon Junction to the Chittenden Road, 9.63 miles north of Canyon when construction begins. The road will remain open from Tower Junction to the Chittenden Road, and the Chittenden Road will remain open to the Mt Washburn trailhead located northwest of the summit. It is envisioned that the first phase of the project will continue through the 2003, 2004, and a portion of 2005 seasons. A full road closure for the above mentioned portion would last for the late 2003 and 2004 seasons. The road will be open to public traffic in 2005 with minor delays.

The project will widen the road to a 24-foot paved width and increase the width of ditches for drainage and catching rockfall.

The second phase of this project is the Grand Loop Road from the Chittenden road intersection to Tower Junction. This phase includes the "Overhanging Cliff" area which has experienced problems with road base settling due to a minor fault in this area. The proposed construction would excavate below the existing road surface by about 40 feet. The excavated material would then be placed back in multiple layers using geotextile fabric. This process should significantly reduce the amount of settlement of the road that currently exists and annual maintenance costs on this section of road.



Dunraven Pass Trailhead parking area. This parking lot will be reconfigured to allow for 33 cars and 4 bus or recreational vehicles. A new restroom structure will also be constructed. Most other parking areas and pullouts along this road segment will also be improved to improve functionality.

Madison to Norris Road (Phase II)

The Madison to Norris Road has been undergoing reconstruction during this last year. The road has been widened to a top paved width of 30 feet, new road base has been constructed, and two miles of new alignment roughed in. The second phase of the project will add a new bridge over the Gibbon River just upstream and beyond site of Gibbon Falls which will connect with the two miles of new alignment of the road. In turn, approximately two miles of road upstream from Gibbon Falls will be removed, and the impacted area will be restored to as natural conditions as possible, returning some prime riparian habitat to benefit park wildlife. The project will be bid on the fall 2004. Aside from part-day road closures (9pm to 9am), a full closure will be needed in early to mid-August of either 2005 or 2006 to work on parking lot expansion at Gibbon Falls and to complete a new bridge connecting with the new alignment.

Public Scoping Begins on Norris to Golden Gate

The National Park Service (NPS) proposes to reconstruct the portion of the Grand Loop Road between Norris and Golden Gate within Yellowstone National Park. The first construction phase of the Norris to Golden Gate road is scheduled to begin in 2007. An environmental assessment will be prepared for this project and when completed, available late 2004 or early 2005 for public review and comment.

The road segment proposed for reconstruction is located from approximately the Norris Campground entrance road to the Bunsen Peak Trailhead parking area.

The current road is approximately 22- 23 feet wide and in some areas has steep drop- offs at the pavement's edge. The road has needed extensive amounts of maintenance in the past few years to keep it in a drivable condition.

Various alternatives will be considered, including: road widening, and road reroutes and no- action. One option to be explored in the environmental assessment is reconstructing the road to a 30- foot paved top



Obsidian Cliff – Located adjacent to the Norris to Golden Gate segment of road within Yellowstone National Park.

width. Ditches would be widened to a parkwide standard for water drainage and rockfall catchement.

Located between Mammoth and Norris, the road provides access to two campgrounds, three picnic areas, and numerous trails and scenic pullouts. The peak season average daily traffic on this road segment is 3,430 vehicles during the heavily visited summer months.

The proposed road project would include replacing the existing road base with well draining aggregate material (evenly sized

gravels), establishing roadside drainage ditches and rockfall catchment areas, paving and formalizing scenic pullouts, and repaving and striping the entire road surface.

Issues that have been identified so far include resource impacts to bears, threatened and endangered species, cumulative habitat loss, potential changes to road character, visual concerns, and cultural resources. The Grand Loop Road is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Sites, and Obsidian Cliff is a National Natural Landmark.

To assist the National Park Service with the Norris to Golden Gate Road project, you are invited to comment on the issues and alternatives and identify additional concerns that you may have.

Please write to:

Superintendent
Norris to Golden Gate Road Project
P.O. Box 168
Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming 82190



Yellowstone National Park – Major Roads

Canyon Rim Drives to be Rehabilitated

The Canyon area roads including the North Rim Drive, the South Rim Drive, and the Brink of the Upper Falls Road, are scheduled to be rehabilitated beginning in 2006. Rehabilitation of these roads will entail resurfacing of the road, improving drainage in problem areas and along the road's edge, replacement of poor road base material in localized areas, repair to retaining walls needed to maintain the road structure, minor reconfigurations to existing parking areas to address circulation problems, addition of curb cuts to address accessibility, and replacement of some curbs and walkways.

It is currently envisioned that the project would rehabilitate the road on its current alignment and at its current width. Some digouts to replace poor road base material would occur in localized areas along the road. Some additional pullouts may be considered, no major changes in the parking lot capacities are foreseen.

In 2004 an environmental assessment for this project will be prepared and made available for public review and comment prior to any final decision on this project. Feel free to comment on this project by writing:

**Superintendent
Canyon Rim Drives Road Project
P.O. Box 168
Yellowstone National Park, WY 82190**





National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Yellowstone National Park
P.O. Box 168
Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming 82190

Std-Prst Mail
Auto
Postage and Fees
PAID
Yellowstone N.P., WY
G-83

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

Yellowstone Roads is a newsletter prepared to inform the public about ongoing and upcoming road projects in Yellowstone National Park.

It is currently planned that this newsletter will continue to be used to update interested parties about ongoing projects in Yellowstone.

A publication of Yellowstone National Park's Planning Office
Phone: (307) 344-2021

Chief of Planning
John Sacklin

Contributors
Doug Madsen

Comments? Write to:
Superintendent
Yellowstone National Park
P.O. Box 168
Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming 82190

Sylvan Pass to Continue Providing Road Building Material for Upcoming Road Projects

The Sylvan Pass Area, located at the summit of the East Entrance Road has been used for the last 11 years as a material source for Yellowstone road reconstruction projects. This "in park" source of aggregate material has reduced the cost of road reconstruction projects by an estimated 4.5 million dollars since 1992. Aggregate sources outside the park have been used for past projects, but their use on some projects become cost prohibitive due to the long haul distances involved. Since the gravel pit was used for the first phase of reconstructing the East Entrance Road in 1992, approximately 500,000 cubic yards of aggregate material have been removed from the site.

The large talus deposits located at Sylvan will continue to be used for producing roadway materials for the remainder of the East Entrance projects, and other projects until the

East Entrance Road is completely reconstructed. Partial reclamation of this site will occur under the 2004 project, as well as future phases of East Entrance Road reconstruction continuing until completion of this road segment.